

6 November 1981  
MLD-1045

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

FROM: Chief, London Bureau

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- October 1981

I. GENERAL

- A. The annual FBIS-BBC Coordination Meeting was held at Caversham Park 20-22 October. Participating were [redacted] Director, FBIS; [redacted] Chief, Operations Group; [redacted] Chief, London Bureau; [redacted] HRD; and [redacted] Editor, News & Publications. The discussions, in the writer's view, were especially useful and the conclusions recorded in the Minutes reaffirmed the vitality and closeness of the FBIS-BBC partnership. Several festive social occasions marked the event.
- B. The latest IRA bombing in London has resulted in tightened security at the Embassy and in the city in general. Parcels carried by shoppers and theatergoers are subject to search at the entrance to stores and theaters.
- C. State Department job/classifiers Bruce Hickernell and Billy Meacham visited the bureau several times during the month to brief local nationals and survey FSN positions. Results of the survey are not yet known.
- D. The bureau audit was performed 2-4 November by [redacted] and [redacted] No significant problems emerged.
- E. The United Kingdom reverted to GMT on 25 October; suddenly it is quite dark at 1700.

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## II. OPERATIONS

### A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. The operational preoccupation throughout most of the month was the scramble to provide maximum coverage of reaction to As-Sadat's assassination and subsequent developments in the Middle East. Erratic behavior and the introduction of new programming exacerbated the usual difficulties in continuously monitoring Libyan stations. London and Nicosia coordinated closely as monitorability shifted from one bureau to the other with changes in the operating hours, frequency usage and parallel broadcasts of Tripoli Domestic and Voice of the Arab Homeland. The BBC mobilized all Arabic resources to maintain an open watch on the stations from 6-20 October, and bureau editors filed numerous FYIs reporting radio behavior and treatment. Two VOA casts -- the short-lived "Voice of Arab Egypt," which carried statements by Egyptian opposition figure Shadli, and "Sudan and the Revolution," an old program that took on new significance as the situation developed -- were given particular attention. Interest in the Sudan also spurred efforts to increase coverage of its media, with EAU concentrating and reporting daily on Omdurman voice broadcasts. The bureau provided TDY assistance to Nicosia and Jordan bureaus, sending Senior Editor [ ] Teletype Supervisor [ ] [ ] and PMU Monitor [ ] to the former, and PMU Monitor [ ] (on leave in the area) to the latter. The Director, FBIS and Chief, FCS, sent messages of appreciation and commendation to the Bureaus and to the BBC Monitoring Service for their handling of the crisis.
2. Tension continued between Solidarity and the Polish authorities, as reportage focused on a series of meetings: the second half of the Solidarity congress, two PZPR plenums and a Sejm session. Polish team overnight shifts were scheduled and auxiliary phone lines to Vienna were booked to cover these events. Primary sources provided many speeches and reports, but the major newsbreak -- the downfall of Kania as party leader and his replacement by Jaruzelski -- was reported first in two FYIs based on REUTER snaps.

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3. Bureau scoops on other significant stories included the Helsinki radio report of Kekkonen's resignation, Stockholm's announcement on the grounded Soviet submarine and initial Saudi reaction to Senate approval of the AWACS deal. At the request of the embassy in Rabat, two items were filed from Moroccan media on remarks made by former President Nixon during his visit there. The U.S. mission to NATO followed a request for text of a KRASNAYA ZVEZDA article on enhanced radiation weapons with a message expressing appreciation for the rapid response.
4. Radio Berlin International introduced three hour-long broadcasts in Polish, a move reminiscent of its introduction of Czech and Slovak broadcasts in early August 1968, about 2 weeks prior to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Two weeks of sampling these new programs revealed little of substantive value, but one has been placed on irregular coverage. OPECNA increased its service to two transmissions a day, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Details of these changes have been reported to FCS.
5. With PMU's Arabic staff stripped bare by the Middle East crisis, Headquarters despatched linguist [ ] on TDY to PMU to provide coverage mainly of Egyptian papers. Other Arabic press coverage was taken over by Headquarters and the Gulf Bureau.
6. PMU has begun interviewing Polish/French candidates to fill a vacancy expected next summer.
7. The BBC tested a Polish candidate for the Austrian Bureau and also provided FBIS with language test and training tapes in Swahili and Portuguese. The BBC requested and Headquarters agreed to supply pre-publication copies of selected Soviet Regional press material on a three-month trial basis.

B. Cologne Unit

1. FBIS Director [ ] and the London Bureau Chief visited the unit 23 October for the FBIS [ ] Meeting. The hospitality shown by Herr Treiss, Director of the [ ] in hosting a superb dinner at Schloss Georghausen, east of Cologne, could hardly have been bettered and the talks considerably clarified what could be done [ ] in German television monitoring.

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2. David Witherow, Head of the BBC Monitoring Service, visited the [ ] during the month and met with the Unit Chief on 13 October.
3. On 30 October, the Unit Chief returned to work in the evening to process an FRG press report on remarks by Soviet officials on disarmament to meet a Wire Service request.

C. Islamabad Unit

1. [ ] FEB/ED, was on TDY at the unit 4-11 October to repair and modify equipment and antennas. [ ] stopped off at London Bureau en route to and from Islamabad to discuss the Islamabad operation and to investigate problems with the remote control equipment. In early November Unit Chief [ ] using instructions relayed from Headquarters by London Bureau Engineer [ ] successfully completed a modification that we think has finally solved the "lock up" problem encountered when BBC personnel were using the remote system.
2. [ ] Chief, Operations Group and [ ] London Chief Editor, visited the unit 15-16 October and met with the charge and other embassy officers. [ ] made the legendary trip to the Khyber Pass and returned to London several pounds lighter.
3. The Unit Chief was among those at the airport to meet the new U.S. ambassador to Pakistan.
4. Embassy GSO completed installation of the unit's emergency generator during the month.
5. The unit made special recordings of Tashkent Uighur broadcasts and mailed the tapes to Nicosia Bureau for processing. It is doing surveys of Chinese stations for the Gulf, Nicosia and Okinawa bureaus. And it is trying to recruit a Baluchi monitor for the Gulf, so far without much success.

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D. Communications/Engineering

1. The Inteq interface device for the new Mode I [ ] circuit was found to have two inherent design problems. The units were returned to Headquarters for modification by the manufacturer. This has not seriously affected [ ] relay operation. ST
2. Five Extel AH/P-11R receive only teleprinters were purchased locally with year-end funds, making it possible to standardize our teleprinter equipment. Once these machines are installed in the Editorial Room, maintenance will be much simplified. ST

III. ADMINISTRATION

- A. Year-end funds were used to purchase 18 Coronamatic Model 8000 electric typewriters. When they are installed in PMU, the conversion from manuals to electrics will be complete. PMU linguists find the electrics' touch much superior to that of the manuals.
- B. Junior Editor [ ] arrived PCS on 16 October. ST
- C. Teletypist trainee [ ] submitted his resignation effective 25 November. The advertisement seeking a replacement produced an unusually high number of applicants -- a sign of the economic hard times. Interviews are currently under way. ST
- D. Teletype Supervisor [ ] returned to duty after extended sick leave following surgery on her hands. Her "renewed fingers" are gradually adapting to the keyboard. ST

IV. VISITS

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on 4 November; State Dept. classifiers Bruce Hickernell and Billy  
Meacham, 16, 22, 23 and 29 October; Auditors [redacted]  
[redacted] 2-4 November.

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Attachments

cc: Chief, Austrian Bureau  
Chief, Cologne Unit